

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EURE-00 PM-03 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 RSC-01

L-02 CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 PRS-01 MC-01 ACDA-05

USIE-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 INRE-00 COME-00 TRSE-00 SIL-01

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----- 099168

O R 301833Z JAN 75

FM AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3037

SEC USAF WASHDC IMMEDIATE

INFO AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

AMEMBASSY OSLO

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS

CINCUSAFE

USCINCEUR

AFSC ANDREWS AFB

ASD WFAFB

C O N F I D E N T I A L BRUSSELS 00866

SEC USAF FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY SHRONTZ

E.O. 11652: NGDS

TAGS: MASS, BE

SUBJECT: F-104 REPLACEMENT

REF: OSAF MSG 290010Z JAN 75

1. EMBASSY WELCOMES NOTIFICATION THAT EUROPEAN NEWS MEDIA,
GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS, AND OTHERS WILL BE PROVIDED WITH
FACTUAL INFO ON F-16 PROGRAM.

2. OUR COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS ON YOUR SPECIFIC
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PROPOSALS ARE AS FOLLOWS:

A. WE ARE PLEASED THAT GENERAL DYNAMICS AND PRATT AND WHITNEY ARE SENDING A SMALL GROUP TO MAKE FACTUAL DATA AVAILABLE TO THE PRESS. WE SEE THEIR MAIN TASK AS TRYING TO PERSUADE THE PRESS THAT THE F-16 PROGRAM WILL PROVIDE THE BELGIAN AIR FORCE WITH A SUPERIOR AIRCRAFT; WILL BRING SUBSTANTIAL INDUSTRIAL AND EMPLOYMENT ADVANTAGES TO THE BELGIAN SUBCONTRACTORS; AND WILL ADVANCE THE CAPABILITIES OF THE BELGIAN AIRCRAFT INDUSTRY THROUGH THE INTRODUCTION OF ADVANCED TECHNOLOGY.

THE MOST EFFECTIVE MEANS TO ACHIEVE THESE ENDS WOULD BE TO ESTABLISH AND MAINTAIN CLOSE PERSONAL CONTACT WITH THE KDY BELGIAN JOURNALISTS. THEY COULD BE GIVEN FACTUAL DATA AND EXPLANATIONS ABOUT THE F-16 PROGRAM. CLOSE CONTACT WITH THEM WOULD ALSO ENABLE GENERAL DYNAMICS AND PRATT AND WHITNEY TO REFUTE EFFECTIVELY AND QUICKLY THE GROSS MISINFORMATION THAT IS BEING PEDDLED IN EUROPE.

TO DO THIS WELL, GENERAL DYNAMICS AND PRATT AND WHITNEY SHOULD HIRE A BELGIAN WHO SPEAKS FRENCH AND DUTCH FLUENTLY AND WHO KNOWS THE LOCAL MEDIA INSIDE AND OUT.

A CLASSICAL PUBLICITY CAMPAIGN INVOLVING GOING DIRECTLY TO THE PUBLIC WITH ADS AND GENERAL PUBLIC STATEMENTS WOULD NOT BE EFFECTIVE AND PROBABLY WOULD BE COUNTERPRODUCTIVE. THERE MAY BE OCCASIONS WHEN HAND-OUTS CAN BE USED TO GOOD EFFECT BUT THEY SHOULD BE USED SELECTIVELY.

B. WE WELCOME INTENSIFIED GENERAL DYNAMICS AND PRATT AND WHITNEY EFFORTS WITH THE POTENTIAL COPRODUCERS. IN OUR JUDGMENT, THIS IS THE HEART OF THE MATTER. AT THE PRESENT TIME MUCH OF BELGIAN INDUSTRY AND LABOR APPEARS TO BE LEANING TOWARD THE FRENCH PLANE. A GREAT DEAL OF HARD EFFORT AND SPECIFIC OFFERS ARE NEEDED IF THE POTENTIAL BELGIAN COPRODUCERS AND BELGIAN LABOR UNIONS ARE TO BE CONVINCED OF THE VALIDITY, SCOPE AND VALUE TO BELGIAN INDUSTRY AND LABOR OF U.S. PROPOSALS. CONFIDENTIAL

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C. SEE (A) AND (B).

D. WE WELCOME BRIEFING OF CHMAAG BY USAF TEST PILOT AT HQ EUCOM, AND WOULD HOPE HE COULD ALSO MEET WITH EUROPEAN MEDIA REPS IN U.S.(SEE E BELOW). WE COULD USE HIM IN BRUSSELS FOR MEETINGS WITH SELECTED PRESS REPS. BUT DO NOT BELIEVE IT WOULD BE HELPFUL TO HAVE HIM

APPEAR IN PUBLIC. WE ALSO QUESTION THE WISDOM OF HAVING HIM MEET WITH BELGIAN AIR FORCE OR GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS ON THIS TRIP. HOWEVER, WE RESERVE FINAL JUDGMENT UNTIL WE SEE HIS PRESENTATION.

E. WE STRONGLY SUPPORT THE IDEA OF CONTRACTOR INVITATION TO BELGIAN MEDIA REPS WITH EMPHASIS ON PRESS, NOT TV (SEE ALSO BRUSSELS 767 NOTAL). INVITATION SHOULD BE FOR THE WEEK OF FEBRUARY 10. OUR AIM HERE SHOULD BE TO CREATE A CLIMATE IN WHICH VANDEN BOEYANTS WILL BE CAUTIOUS AND NOT STATE PUBLICLY THAT HE FAVORS THE F-1 WHEN HE MEETS WITH THE OTHER DEFENSE MINISTERS ON FEBRUARY 17. IT WOULD HELP IF THE BELGIAN JOURNALISTS WERE GIVEN ASSISTANCE IN FILING THEIR STORIES WHILE THEY ARE IN THE U.S. WE ALSO SUGGEST THAT THE INVITATION TO MEDIA REPS BE MADE IF POSSIBLE ON A COUNTRY BY COUNTRY BASIS, TO LIMIT GROUPS TO SMALL NUMBERS (5-6 EACH) WHICH WOULD ALLOW INDIVIDUAL ATTENTION AND WOULD REDUCE THE TIME THEY SPEND IN REINFORCING EACH OTHER'S PREJUDICES. THEIR PROGRAM SHOULD INCLUDE SECRETARY SHRONTZ BRIEFING IF POSSIBLE.

3. WE REITERATE OUR PREVIOUS REQUEST (PARA 1, BRUSSELS 767) FOR A SHORT, AUTHORITATIVE USG STATEMENT IN LAYMAN'S LANGUAGE EXPLAINING PRECISELY HOW AND WHY THE USAF SELECTED THE F-16 OVER THE YF-17. THIS WOULD HELP US LAY TO REST SOME LOCAL COMMENTARY TO THE EFFECT THAT POLITICAL CONSIDERATIONS IN THE U.S. DETERMINED THE DECISION.

4. IT WOULD BE HELPFUL TO HAVE AN AUTHORITATIVE EXPLANATION WE CAN USE WITH THE PUBLIC OF POSSIBLE U.S. NAVY INTEREST IN THE YF-17. WE OUGHT TO COUNTER REPORTS CIRCULATING HERE THAT THE USG MIGHT CHOOSE PRESENT CONFIDENTIAL

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CONFIGURATION OF YF-17 IN THE NEAR FUTURE FOR USN USE AND THAT EUROPEANS WOULD BE WISE TO DELAY CHOICE OF THE F-104 REPLACEMENT UNTIL THAT DECISION IS MADE. IF POSSIBLE, AN EXPLANATION SHOULD COVER THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN MISSIONS FORESEEN FOR THE F-16 AND THE U.S. NAVY'S SPECIALIZED REQUIREMENTS, WITH INDICATION OF NEW YF-17 DEVELOPMENT TIMETABLE (WHICH WE ASSUME AT BEST TO BE LONG) AND SIGNIFICANT TIME-CONSUMING CHANGES WHICH MIGHT BE REQUIRED IN FY-17 CONFIGURATION.

5. USIS/BRUSSELS IS SEPARATELY REQUESTING USIS FOR COPYRIGHT CLEARANCE FOR JANUARY 20 AVIATION WEEKLY ARTICLE ("F-16 GAINS ADVANTAGE IN MARKET") WHICH IS JUST THE TYPE OF INFORMATIVE PUBLICITY COMPANY REPS CAN USE EFFECTIVELY HERE WITH CONTACTS THEY WILL

DEVELOP. RENNER

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NNN

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